

## Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07  
NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 PM-04 NSC-05 SS-15  
SY-05 INRE-00 /072 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/CAR:GPALAZZOLO:BABS  
APPROVED BY ARA:WHLUERS  
ARA/CAR:FTUMMINIA

-----060511Z 087177 /16

O 060447Z JAN 77  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN IMMEDIATE

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FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, US, TD

SUBJECT: PRESS ARTICLE ON AMBASSADOR BRITTON

1. TRANSMITTED FYI IS TEXT OF ARTICLE ENTITLED "U.S.  
AMBASSADOR BRINGS OWN STYLE TO BARBADOS" WHICH APPEARED ON  
FRONT PAGE OF JAN 5 WASHINGTON POST.

2. BEGIN TEXT: BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS--WHEN THEODORE R.  
BRITTON JR. WAS NAMED U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BARBADOS IN LATE  
1975, NO ONE EXPECTED HIM TO TAKE HIS JOB FOR MORE THAN IT  
WAS--A POLITICAL PLUM APPOINTMENT BY PRESIDENT FORD OF A  
BLACK REPUBLICAN FOR SERVICES RENDERED.

3. WHAT BETTER WAY TO REWARD A SUPPORTER--AND ENHANCE THE  
REPUBLICANS' IMAGE AMONG BLACKS--THAN TO SEND BRITTON TO  
BEAUTIFUL BARBADOS, WITH ITS AVERAGE YEAR-ROUND TEMPERA-  
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TURE OF 77; GIVE HIM AN EMBASSY, A SPRAWLING RESIDENTIAL  
ESTATE ON BARBADOS' LUXURIOUS "GOLD COAST," SOME SERVANTS  
AND A CHAUFFEUR.

4. BRITTON GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED THAT--BUT ONLY AS A START.

5. DESCRIBED BY FORMER BARBADOS PRIME MINISTER ERROL

BARROW AS "THE UGLY AMERICAN" AND REFERRED TO BY OTHERS

HERE AS "THE KING OF BARBADOS," BRITTON EMBARKED ON A VAST ENLARGEMENT OF HIS DOMAIN AND WON THE HOSTILITY OF SEVERAL OF HIS EMBASSY AIDES.

6. THE DISENCHANTMENT WITH BRITTON'S PERFORMANCE BY SOME OF HIS STAFF MEMBERS HAS RESULTED IN AN INVESTIGATION BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTOR ON CHARGES OF INCOMPETENCE.

7. SOURCES AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAID THAT PRESIDENT-ELECT JIMMY CARTER HAS BEEN TOLD OF THE SITUATION AT THE BARBADOS EMBASSY. "IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE (BRITTON) IS GOING TO BE AROUND MUCH LONGER," THE SOURCE SAID.

8. BRITTON IS ALLEGED TO HAVE "PUNISHED AND HUMILIATED" ONE EMBASSY OFFICIAL WHO DISAGREED WITH HIS POLICIES. HE REPORTEDLY ANGERED THE BARBADOS GOVERNMENT BY BECOMING TOO INVOLVED IN LOCAL POLITICS, UPSTAGING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT THEIR OWN GATHERINGS AND PUBLICLY CRITICIZING BARBADOS OFFICIALS.

9. AFTER ONE DISPUTE, WHICH RESULTED IN STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS CHOOSING A SUBORDINATE'S PROPOSAL OVER BRITTON'S, BRITTON ASKED FOR THE OFFICER'S REMOVAL, LOCKED HIM OUT OF THE EMBASSY, REMOVED HIS FURNITURE FROM HIS OFFICE AND LEFT HIS WORK PAPERS IN AN UNLOCKED ROOM.

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10. SO FAR, THREE OF BRITTON'S TOP OFFICERS HAVE RESIGNED OR BEEN REASSIGNED FROM THE EMBASSY, CRITICIZING THE EMERGENCE OF A MINI-EMPIRE OUT OF THIS FOURTH CLASS EMBASSY, (THE LOWEST CATEGORY) THAT IS COSTING, INCLUDING EXPANSIONS, MORE THAN DOLS 1 MILLION A YEAR.

11. THE MINI-EMPIRE BRITTON'S CRITICS REFER TO INCLUDES BRITTON'S ESTABLISHMENT IN BARBADOS OF AN OFFICE FOR THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO AID PROGRAM HERE.

12. BRITTON ESTABLISHED A LIAISON BETWEEN HIMSELF AND WHAT TECHNICALLY WOULD BE THE BARBADOS NAVY. BUT BARBADOS DOES NOT HAVE A NAVY. HE ESTABLISHED A BRANCH OF THE U.S. INFORMATION SERVICE, ALTHOUGH AGENCY STAFF MEMBERS SAY THAT THEY ARE HARD PRESSED TO FIND INFORMATION TO DISSEMINATE.

13. BARBADOS, WITH ABOUT 148,000 RESIDENTS, IS THE SMALLEST CARIBBEAN COUNTRY TO HAVE A U.S. EMBASSY. YET,

THE EMBASSY, WITH 25 FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICERS WORKING IN THE CONSULATE AND POLITICAL SECTIONS, IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING THE SIZE OF EMBASSIES SERVING MUCH LARGER COUNTRIES,

SUCH AS TRINIDAD, WHICH HAS A POPULATION OF MORE THAN A MILLION AND JUST OVER 50 U.S. EMBASSY OFFICERS.

14. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER BRITTON'S BUSINESS ARRANGEMENT WITH A BARBADIAN CONTRACTOR IS BEING INVESTIGATED. ACCORDING TO WILLIAM DIEDRICH, THE POLITICAL OFFICER BRITTON LOCKED OUT, BRITTON HIRED A FULL-TIME CONTRACTOR--WHOSE BUSINESS IS SUPPORTED SOLELY BY BRITTON--TO RENOVATE HIS RESIDENCE FOR NEARLY DOLS 200,000.

15. IN AN INTERVIEW, BRITTON DEFENDED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AID AND USIS OFFICES, AND A DEFENSE LIAISON WITH THE PUTATIVE NAVY, SAYING THEY WERE A "CREDIT TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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PEOPLE OF THE CARIBBEAN SINCE WE HAVE THOSE THINGS HERE."

16. HE SAID AID WAS THE "LOGICAL" AGENCY TO MONITOR THE DOLS 20 MILLION IN U.S. LOANS TO THE CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, WHICH IN TURN LOANS THE MONEY TO NEEDY COUNTRIES.

17. BUT BRITTON'S DETRACTORS CLAIM THAT MONITORING OF FUNDS DID NOT REQUIRE A NEW AGENCY, SINCE THE REGULAR EMBASSY STAFF HAS DONE AN ADEQUATE JOB.

18. ALTHOUGH BARBADOS IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE MOST STABLE AND PEACEFUL OF THE INDEPENDENT COUNTRIES IN THE CARIBBEAN, SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL BRITTON BROUGHT IN A CONTINGENT OF MARINES, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE U.S. MISSION WAS ESTABLISHED HERE IN 1821.

19. "DID YOU NOTICE 'EM?" BRITTON, RECLINING ON A SOFA IN HIS SPACIOUS OFFICE ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF THE CANADIAN IMPERIAL BANK BUILDING, ASKED A VISITOR. "DID YOU SEE WHAT THEY DID WHEN I CAME IN? YEAH, THEY SALUTED. IT ADDS A SENSE OF RESPECT TO THE PLACE."

20. IT DID NOT SUIT BRITTON THAT THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED U.S. POSITION TOWARD THE CARIBBEAN WAS TO "LAY LOW," AS ONE FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER PUT IT, WHILE MOST OF THE SMALL CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES UNDERWENT POLITICAL CHANGE.

21. ALTHOUGH THE 50-YEAR-OLD SOUTH CAROLINA NATIVE WAS NOT EXPERIENCED IN CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS, HE SAYS HE SOON LEARNED-WHAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS EMBASSY-SHOULD BE.

22. "WE DO REPRESENT THE MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY IN THE WORLD," BRITTON SAID DURING AN INTERVIEW, "AND WE SHOULD SHOW IT."

23. THE PRESENCE OF THE FIVE MARINES BROUGHT THE FIRST UNCLASSIFIED

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DISPUTE BETWEEN BRITTON AND THEN PRIME MINISTER BARROW, WHO PROHIBITED THE MARINES FROM CARRYING WEAPONS OR WEARING UNIFORMS ON THE STREETS OF BARBADOS.

24. A WIDER RIFT SOON DEVELOPED BETWEEN BRITTON AND SOME OF HIS STAFF WHO COMPLAINED THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S STRICT FORMALITY WAS UNREASONABLE AND THAT HIS POLICIES WERE IRRATIONAL.

25. "THE POWER JUST WENT TO HIS HEAD," SAID DIEDRICH, WHO WAS REASSIGNED FOLLOWING THE DISPUTE WITH BRITTON.

26. "HE WAS GIVEN TO DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR. FOR INSTANCE, WE'VE GOT A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE WORKING HERE, BUT HE DECIDES TO PUT OUT A 35-PAGE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY--EXPENSIVE--LISTING EVERYBODY'S NUMBER TWICE--ONCE UNDER THEIR NAME, THEN IN A SEPARATE SECTION UNDER THEIR TITLE.

27. "WE GET RED-BORDERED ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICES ADVISING US TO TELL OUR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER WHEN WE WANT A VACATION, THINGS EVERYONE KNOWS EXCEPT HIM."

28. BRITTON'S FIRST TEST OF POLITICAL JUDGEMENT CAME ALMOST AS SOON AS HE BECAME AMBASSADOR, WHEN IT WAS LEARNED THAT CUBAN PRIME MINISTER FIDEL CASTRO WAS SENDING TROOPS TO ANGOLA VIA BARBADOS.

29. "YOU COULD SEE THEM ARRIVING ON CHARTER FLIGHTS FROM CUBA," DIEDRICH SAID. "THERE WERE BETWEEN 10 AND 15 FLIGHTS A WEEK, AND IT WAS STRANGE--ALL MALES, BETWEEN 20 AND 30 YEARS OLD, GETTING OFF THE PLANE TO STRETCH, AND GETTING BACK ON. PRETTY SOON WE FOUND OUT, AND WASHINGTON WANTED US TO TALK TO BARROW ABOUT IT. BARROW TOLD BRITTON HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT IT, AND BRITTON BOUGHT IT HOOK AND LINE."

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30. "THAT'S NOT TRUE," BRITTON SAYS. "I KNEW WHAT WAS

GOING ON. JUST REMEMBER THIS: THE U.S. WANTED THOSE FLIGHTS STOPPED, AND THEY STOPPED. NOW I DIDN'T GO OUT ONTO THE RUNWAY WAVING MY HANDS ... BUT LET IT SUFFICE TO SAY IT STOPPED."

31. MEMBERS OF BARROW'S GOVERNMENT SAY THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER STOPPED THEM NOT AT BRITTON'S URGING BUT BECAUSE HE FEARED KNOWLEDGE OF THE FLIGHTS MIGHT HURT THE AMERICAN TOURIST TRADE.

32. BRITTON WAS APPOINTED THROUGH THE PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION OF SEN. STROM THURMOND (R-S.C.), AFTER SERVING IN OTHER AGENCIES UNDER THE NIXON AND FORD ADMINISTRATIONS.

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33. "I ALSO GOT THE SUPPORT OF CHARLES DIGGS (CHAIRMAN OF THE CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS). HOW'S THAT FOR BEING MIDDLE OF THE ROAD?" ASKED BRITTON.

34. "YOU SEE," SAID BRITTON, "THIS IS GOING TO BE A BETTER EMBASSY WHEN I LEAVE THAN IT WAS WHEN I GOT HERE. I'M NEVER CONCERNED WITH MONEY, OR WHAT IT TAKES TO DO A JOB. I JUST DO THE JOB." END TEXT.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Office:** ORIGIN ARA  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 5  
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**Review Release Date:** n/a  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** PRESS ARTICLE ON AMBASSADOR BRITTON  
**TAGS:** SOPN, US, BB, WASHINGTON POST, (BRITTON, THEODORE R JR)  
**To:** BRIDGETOWN  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/836bb8dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009